

SIMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
BEFOEMEE 457

Zola, as we know, was not an orator. Emotion made Ms voice tremble as lie began to read Ms declaration, but composure gradually came to Mm, followed towards the close by real strength of manner. And though, as the foregoing extracts indicate, many sentences were followed by violent protests and ridiculous shouts of "Proof! proof!"—ridiculous by reason of the fact that the judge and the military witnesses had done their utmost to prevent any proof from being supplied — the audience listened with great attention. Once Zola's voice cracked as he tried to give emphasis to a word, and his listeners then jeered him, but, on the whole, he did far better than had been expected by those who knew how difficult it was for him to speak in public.

He was followed by Maitre Labori, who had fought most manfully and skilfully throughout the whole proceedings, and who now speedily subdued the hostile and noisy audience. Whenever, at the outset of Ms great speech, the Nationalists laughed at a statement or an argument, counsel repeated it in a yet more emphatic manner than before. Groans arose when, referring to his client, he said: "A patriot like Zola"; and at once, turning like a lion, he repeated the words: "Yes, a patriot like Zola — a patriot with a braver heart, a clearer vision, a loftier love of Ms own land than is owned by any of the shallow-minded

swallowers of phrases who rage at him. One of these days you will recognise your own folly and Ms greatness." Then the brave advocate paused for a few seconds, as if challenging a new outburst. But there was complete silence. "Ah, well, then," he said, with a touch of fighting laughter in his voice, "I will continue." And having conquered his audience he reverted to his argument. His address was con-